

White Paper Report

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WHITE PAPER

1. Cover Page
 2. Narrative Description
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- grant number: 237440; HD-51110-10
- title of project: Oregon Petrarch Open Book
- name of project director(s): P.I. Massimo Lollini; Co-P.I. Jeff Magoto
- National Endowment for the Humanities; Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants
- November 30, 2011

2. Narrative Description

The goal of the "Oregon Petrarch Open Book," or "OPOB," is to enhance a scholarly database-driven website around Francis Petrarch's fourteenth-century poetry collection, the *Canzoniere* (the original Latin title is *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, or Collection of poems in the vernacular). For the tenure of the Digital Humanities Start-Up Level II Grant we planned four specific objectives:

- 1) The addition and visualization of 3 new versions of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* in our site: first the critical edition prepared by Prof. Savoca (Petrarca, *Francesco. Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*. Edizione critica di Giuseppe Savoca, Olschki, Firenze, 2008); second, the diplomatic edition prepared by Ettore Modigliani in 1904 (*Il canzoniere di Francesco Petrarca* riprodotto letteralmente dal cod. vat. lat. 3195, con tre fotoincisioni a cura di Ettore Modigliani. Roma: La Società, 1904); and finally the third, the *Segniano 1* manuscript from the Laurenziana Library in Florence, Italy.
- 2) The implementation of a much-needed comprehensive database system for musical adaptations of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* that exceeds all currently existing archives in scope and contents.
- 3) The improvement of the functionality of existing database software and of specific tools, such as "Compare translations," by providing multiple movable containers of selectable content, text, images, audio or video.
- 4) The beginning of a collaboration with Brown University's Virtual Humanities Lab (VHL) in order to build "web services" in the Petrarch website to enable compatibility between the OPOB texts and the various tools in use at Brown University. These web services allow for specific poems or poem related material to be used by the VHL at Brown via a TEI/XML format which standardizes the various parts of the material for easier integration.

The Principal Investigator, Massimo Lollini, the Co-PI Jeff Magoto and the Web Designer Travis Shea met every week for the entire duration of the grant from September 2010 to September 2011 to coordinate the plan of work and discuss issues of intellectual content and technical feasibility. Lollini created a working blog to post questions and complement the discussion on the different activities planned for the grant, facilitating the communication among the members of the OPOB team. Special meetings with other members of the OPOB team were called, mostly on a biweekly basis, to address specific parts of the work being carried out.

All the goals of the grant were met in a timely fashion, as they had been planned in advance. As I will explain below, it was not possible to obtain the permission to use the *Segniano 1*

manuscript from the Laurenziana Library in Florence (Italy), but we were able to secure the right to use two other important manuscripts from the Queriniana Library in Brescia, Italy.

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The previous Petrarch website existed as a blend of a FileMaker database and a Drupal database (MySQL) with logic. In order to take full advantage of the latest version of Drupal, it was necessary to combine both sources into a single Drupal database for the new website. This was done in September and October, 2010 by extracting the FileMaker and old Drupal database into spreadsheets that contained individual content types for each translation and archive. Then, through several custom built modules, the data was imported into the new website that built the relationships between base text, translations and archives, so that related data could be displayed easier. A similar process was done importing in the new database the critical edition of the *Canzoniere* prepared by Prof. Savoca. This edition was sent to us as a Word document that had to be transformed into a spreadsheet that recorded each poem, stanza and line logically. This operation was completed successfully and now our site includes a second base text, the most recent and accredited Italian edition of the *Canzoniere*.

The work on the Petrarch website during November and December, 2010 focused on two themes, the re-organization of current content and the development of tools to compare and visualize one or more elements of content. Also the website infrastructure was upgraded to the latest version (7) of the open source Content Management System, Drupal. The reorganization involved structuring menus and grouping like content in a way that focuses attention on what the particular user is trying to accomplish. The roles that have been targeted are: "Administrator," "authenticated user," "scholar," "student and general audience," "student and contributor." Each role has been given a customized menu and interface that will allow users to find and take advantage of their intended content in a helpful manner.

The new tools for comparison and visualization were developed in January, February and March, 2011. These new tools are centered on providing multiple options for both viewing the poem in its various versions and translations as well as comparing the poem to other works that have been inspired by that poem. Multiple views have been created to provide comparisons of translations or different versions of Petrarch's poems in a binary format, structured views of a poem and its decomposition into paraphrases, summaries and tweets. Also, a multi-windowed interface was implemented that provides the ability to compare any poem of the *Canzoniere* and its accompanying mediums.

Since an important guiding principle of the Oregon Petrarch Open Book website is collaboration, the creation of tools to support data submission was an early task. We prepared tools to accept submissions on paraphrases, summaries and tweet versions of

the poems that students have put together as part of class assignments. These submissions begin in a temporary format that is not reflected in the actual content of the site until after review by an administrator and then run through a conversion process to make them permanent additions. The submission of the actual Italian paraphrases, summaries and tweets for all the poems of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* was coordinated by Massimo Lollini in conjunction with a course on "Re-reading Petrarch's *Canzoniere*" that he taught in Winter term, 2011 at the University of Oregon.

The paraphrases of Petrarch's poems were prepared in advance by Lollini's assistant, Prof. Cinzia Capon. Students in Lollini's course, after reading the original poems and the Italian paraphrases, were asked to produce summaries and tweets for each poem and to submit them to the OPOB. All the submissions were moderated by Lollini and, his review of all the material submitted was completed during the Summer of 2011. The OPOB has now available for all users a set of paraphrases, summaries and tweets for all the poems of the *Canzoniere* in Italian. The OPOB in Summer 2011 started implementing an experiment in crowd sourcing inviting the registered users to provide translations of the 366 Italian tweets of the *Canzoniere* in English. These submissions will be moderated by Lollini and Jamie Richards, a professional translator (Comparative Literature, University of Oregon).

Another submission tool was created in order to collect information about musical settings that are related to the poems of Petrarch. As a musical setting is added to the website, various fields of the database collect information and build relations with one another so that an instant hierarchy of composers and musicians exists that can show all of the musical settings for a specific musician within the site. This part of the submissions is managed by Marc Vanscheeuwijck (School of Music, University of Oregon), who conceived the database and is implementing it. Therefore, the submissions to this part of the database do not need to be reviewed before being made available as a unique piece of content. Vanscheeuwijck started compiling the information necessary for the database. He has been collecting all the composers' names, and printed works (titles, year of publication) from a 1911 publication by Carlo Culcasi, (*Il Petrarca e la Musica*. Florence: Bemporad, 1911). This is the only publication available that gathers such a large number of musical madrigals written on Petrarch poems. Vanscheeuwijck has entered all of the available parameters, i.e., names, titles, dates of printing, and number of voices and instruments.

The information Culcasi provides is sometimes incorrect or incomplete and needs to be checked with another late 19th-century source available in important libraries only (*Bibliografia della musica italiana vocale profana pubblicata dal 1500 al 1700*; Nuova ed. interamente rifatta e aumentata con gli indici dei musicisti, poeti, cantanti, dedicatari e dei capoversi dei testi letterari by Emil Vogel). As soon as Vanscheeuwijck is back on the UO campus on Winter 2012 and has easy access to sources in our library, the contents of the database will be completed and put directly on the website. For each of the poems of

the *Canzoniere*, there are an average of 3-5 musical settings with several parameters to be compiled. Only when the information for each one poem is complete, will it be inserted in the web site.

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In January, 2011 the OPOB started an on-line peer-reviewed open access journal entitled *Humanist Studies & the Digital Age* to coordinate all the scholars and students involved in our project and to disseminate and help preserving the resources that we are making available in our site. The University of Oregon library is currently experimenting with the “Open Journal System” developed by the Public Knowledge Project at Simon Fraser University, and provided that system as the initial publishing and editorial management system for the journal. JQ Johnson, member of the team of the OPOB for this grant and Director, Scholarly Communications & Instructional Support University of Oregon Libraries, was instrumental in the successful and timely implementation of the journal. The first issue of *Humanist Studies & the Digital Age* (<http://journals.library.oregonstate.edu/hdsal>) represents the fruition of an extended conversation based on “Francesco Petrarca from Manuscript to Digital Culture,” a day-long symposium held at the University of Oregon in April of 2010. Hosted by Massimo Lollini and the Romance Languages Department, the event was conceived of in conjunction with the graduate seminar “Humanism and Culture of the Book” co-taught by Massimo Lollini and Leah Middlebrook in the Spring of 2010 and was attended by an international, multigenerational cohort of scholars and readers. The first volume of the journal includes all the papers presented in the above mentioned symposium, most of them are related to the Petrarch Project and OPOB. The second issue of the journal will appear at the end of 2012; it will include further reflections on the use of the OPOB for teaching and research, and a review of other digital projects in the area of digital humanism and philology.

After adding to OPOB the critical edition of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* prepared by Prof. Savoca during the Fall 2010, in Spring 2011 we started the work to include the Modigliani manuscript into the new website from the collection residing at the University of Oregon Libraries. Karen Estlund, Head of Digital Library Services at the University of Oregon and a member of the OPOB team, was responsible for the creation of the digital repository associated with the OPOB. We were able to include in the new repository created by Estlund the Manuscript Segniano 1 but unfortunately the Laurenziana library in Florence did not give us the right to use it in our site. They requested a sum of money that we were not able to pay. However, Lollini was able to negotiate with the Queriniana Library in Brescia the acquisition in digital format of one important manuscript, the codex Queriniano D II 21 and of the *editio princeps* of the *Canzoniere*, published in Venice in 1470 by Vindelin de Spira (Incunabulum Queriniano G V 15). These important assets are now part of the University of Oregon Knight Library repository associated to the OPOB. In the near future, we plan to encode them with the TEI and then visualize them within the OPOB.

Finally, we were able to include in the repository other versions of the *Canzoniere* that were not contemplated in our original plan: the commentary by Alessandro Vellutello (*Le volgari opere del Petrarca con l'esposizione di Alessandro Vellutello*, 1525), and the French translation by Vasquin Philieul (*Toutes les euvres vulgaires de François Pétrarquet*, contenant quatre livres de M. D. Laure d'Avignon, sa maistresse, jadis par luy composez en langage thuscan et mis en françoys par Vasquin Philieul avecques briefz sommaires ou argumens requis pour plus facile intelligence du tou. Avignon, Barthelemy Bonhomme, 1555). These assets are now visualized within the OPOB.

Wherever possible, the texts were made keyword searchable through optical character recognition. The poems of each manuscript have been identified and matched with the corresponding poem in the *Canzoniere*. The images of these texts were included in the site in multiple formats in order for a user to take advantage of them in the comparison and visualization section. The library's repository associated to the OPOB has the images described through XML documents and can provide them on demand over HTTP that the new site can view on a per user basis. Tools were applied to the images that allow the user to zoom and pan around within a window in order to make the comparison to other content more accessible. All of the texts of the library repository are now linked to the OPOB and at the same time have been made available for anyone to access and use for research. The metadata is also available via the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting, making the texts available to be re-used in other projects. <https://oregondigital.org/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=/petrarch>

The work on the repository took place from Winter to Summer, 2011. There were many sources of content that needed to be included into the website that came in various forms and from various sources. Some content existed in spreadsheets or resided on a server at the library, which required several custom modules to load the data and then display them. In Spring and Summer, 2011 the multi-comparison tool was designed, tested and improved to make available all of the various content that was loaded into the site and make it viewable in movable containers. This allows for an ad-hoc comparison of related and unrelated content that can take advantage of large screen sizes but was flexible enough for an iPad. There was also a need to zoom and pan images of manuscripts that was built into the tool. After the implementation of these changes Lollini and Magoto prepared a video introduction to the most distinctive features of the OPOB that was uploaded into the site and made available on You Tube as well. <http://petrarch.uoregon.edu/video-introduction>
<http://youtu.be/krm0Lt7YI-Q>

In Spring 2011, following the plan announced in our grant, we started the first steps to collaborate with Brown University's Virtual Humanities Lab (VHL) in order to build "web services" in the Petrarch website to enable compatibility between the OPOB texts and the various tools in use at Brown University. These web services will allow for specific poems or poem-related material to be used by the VHL at Brown and other repositories via a TEI/

XML format which standardizes the various parts of the material for easier integration. In Spring 2011 Lollini and Shea visited the Brown University's Virtual Humanities Lab and started to consult with Wayne Storey and John Walsh at Indiana University to design a plan for implementing the TEI in the assets of the OPOB. To this goal Lollini has submitted an application for a 2012-13 ACLS Digital Innovation Grant and, in collaboration with Karen Estlund and the University of Oregon Knight Library, is planning to submit a 2012-13 NEH Implementation Grant. We hope that these grants will allow us to continue our project.

Finally, in Summer 2011, Travis Shea prepared the website for public consumption and private contributions. This involved moving links to preferred locations, creating new content for help and resource and checking and tweaking permissions so that every user was allowed to do what was appropriate. Shea also refined the workflow for new content that allowed for moderation before being added to the public view. The site also needed to be moved to the production space on the server and all links updated from the development site to the new production site. The new site of the OPOB was officially made available to the public at the end of October 2011. Lollini has submitted a complete list of all the Grant products and coverage to the EGMS site <https://securegrants.neh.gov/eGMS/Products/ProductsMain.aspx>

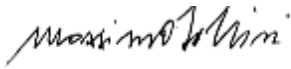
Since it was launched one month ago the OPOB web site has received moderate national and international attention. We did not transfer the users of the old site to the new one, so the number of registered users now is limited to 35. Nevertheless, the site allowed to trigger new collaborative partnerships with Brown University and Indiana University. Moreover, a group of scholars from the University of Bologna is planning to contribute new material to the OPOB. One of the most prestigious and well-known Italian literary e-journal, *Griselda online*, presented a brief review of the OPOB a few days after it was launched. <http://www.griseldaonline.it/informatica/index.htm>

Also, it is encouraging to see that Paola Italia, a scholar from the university of Siena (Italy), has registered to the site, announcing that she will use the OPOB for Didactic purposes while teaching a course on Italian Literature in 2011-2012. Other scholars presented similar motivations; Lollini and colleagues at the University of Oregon will soon use the site to teach courses on Petrarch and Petrarchism. International Ph.D. students are registering to the site for consultation and research purposes. However, we realize that the major weakness of the site right now is the limited number of registered users. One of the challenges of our project in the near future is to become more visible on the web so that it can acquire more users. To this goal in the months to come, we will publicise the OPOB and disseminate its product taking advantage of different venues, including the *Humanist Studies & the Digital Age* journal and the experiment in crowd sourcing, inviting users to provide translations of the 366 Italian tweets of the *Canzoniere* in English. It is worth mentioning in closing this report that Lollini will present the OPOB and the Journal *Humanist Studies & the Digital Age* at the 2012 meeting of the MLA in Seattle in a panel on Digital Humanities in the Italian Context.

http://www.mla.org/program_details?prog_id=S379.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Massimo Lollini".

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